

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 3348

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AL, BE

SUJECT: ALBANIAN INTERNAL POLITICS

AT JUNE 17 POLADS, BELGIAN REP CIRCULATED ANALYSIS OF ALBANIAN
INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. FOLLOWING IS MISSION'S INFORMAL
TRANSLATION OF MOST INTEREST PORTIONS FRENCH-LANGUAGE ORIGINAL.

BEGIN EXCERPTED TEXT:

THE YEAR 1974 WAS MARKED BY THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MINISTER OF
DEFENSE BALUKKU. IT IS NEARLY CERTAIN THAT THE CONFLICT WHICH BROUGHT
ABOUT BALUKKU'S DEPARTURE STEMMED FROM MILITARY QUESTIONS AND FROM
ALBANIA'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA IN THIS FIELD. FOLLOWING BALUKKU'S
REMOVAL IN LATE SUMMER OF 1974, THE CHINESEMILITARY ATTACHE IN
TIRANA WAS RECALLED TO PEKING AND THE ALBANIAN MILITARY
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ADVISOR IN PEKING (A GENERAL) RETURNED TO TIRANA. BALUKKU'S
TWO DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTERS WERE ALSO REMOVED AND REPLACED
BY FOUR CIVILIANS, ONE OF WHOM IS A MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE AND ANOTHER, AN ENGINEER. THE REST OF THE STORY

IS IN THE REALM OF SPECULATION. DID BALKKU, OUT OF PERFECTIONISM, TRY TO FORCE CHINA TO FURNISH EXPENSIVE MATERIAL TO ALBANIA, WHOSE MILITARY EQUIPMENT MUST ALREADY BE A HEAVY BURDEN ON PEKING? DID THE CHINESE INSIST ON HIS REMOVAL? DID HE TRY TO MOUNT A COUP D'ETAT WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ARMY? WAS HE EXECUTED AFTER A SUMMARY COURT MARTIAL? THESE ARE ALL QUESTION MARKS. ONE CAN HOWEVER DETECT A NEW NOTE IN AN ARTICLE BY ONE OF THE NEW DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTERS PUBLISHED IN ZERI-I-POPULLIT LAST MONTH. SPEAKING OF THE DUTIES OF ARMY OFFICERS, THE AUTHOR RECALLS THAT IN ALBANIA THE PARTY COMMANDS THE RIFLE AND NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

THIS SPRING, ONE CAN SEE SIGNS OF A NEW OFFENSIVE IN ALBANIA: THAT OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BUREUCRATISM. ONE FINDS HERE A REFLECTION OF THE RIGID AND AGING ALBANIAN LEADERSHIP'S FEAR OF A NEW GENERATION OF TECHNOCRATS. THESE TECHNOCRATS COULD GIVE THE GOVERNMENT A MORE FUNCTIONAL ORIENTATION AND THUS LEAD IT TO ABANDON THE PATH OF UNCOMPROMISING DOCTRINAL RIGOR. SUCH A SHIFT WOULD INEVITABLY BRING ABOUT THE FALL OF THE HODJA GROUP, WHICH TRIES STUBBORNLY AND BLINDLY TO AVOID SUCH AN OUTCOME BY DOING ITS UTMOST TO LIMIT CONTACT BETWEEN ALBANIA AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

AFTER LIGHTING ON THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BUREAUCRATISM NOW SEEMS TO BE CONCENTRATED ON THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE. AN APRIL 29 ARTICLE IN ZERI-I-POPULLIT DENOUNCED THE DANGERS OF DEVELOPING FOREIGN COMMERCE.

IT APPEARS THAT TWO SECRETARIES OF STATE FOR FOREIGN TRADE HAVE NOW FALLEN INTO DISGRACE: ONE HAS DISAPPEARED, AND HIS COLLEAGUE, MR. KATI, IS REPORTED SICK. AN ALBANIAN IS REPORTED TO HAVE CONFIDED TO AN ASIAN DIPLOMAT THAT THIS WAS ONLY A PRELUDE TO A MUCH WIDER PURGE WHICH WOULD REACH CLOSE TO HALF OF THE CIVIL SERVICE CADRES. THERE CONFIDENTIAL

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IS NOTHING AS YET TO CONFIRM SUCH A RUMOR, BUT DIPLOMATS STATIONED IN TIRANA NOTE THAT THEIR CONTACTSSOMETIMES DISAPPEAR WITHOUT A TRACE, WHEREAS OTHERS, WHO WERE FORMERLY DIRECTORS, SUDDENLY BECOME SUBORDINATE OFFICIALS. IN GENERAL, CIVIL SERVANTS SEEM TO BE AFRAID AND THOSE WHO WERE FORMERLY COMMUNICATIVE NOW DISPLAY GREAT CAUTION.

IT MAY WELL BE THAT UNDER THE COVER OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BUREAUCRATISM A NEW FACTIONAL OR PERSONAL POWER STRUGGLE IS UNDER WAY AT A TIME WHEN HODJA'S HEALTH APPEARS SERIOUSLY WEAKENED, AS WAS EVIDENT DURING HIS APPEARANCE AT THE MAY 1 FESTIVITIES. ACCORDING TO SOME OBSERVERS, THE PARTISANS OF A TOUGH LINE, HEADED BY MEHMET SHEHOU, ARE

ATTEMPTING TO USE THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BUREAUCRATISM TO GET
RID OF THEIR OPPONENTS WHO FAVOR A MORE FLEXIBLE LINE. THE
LATTER ARE REPORTED TO BE FAVORABLE TO A CONCILIATORY
ATTITUDE TOWARD THE USSR WHICH, ACCORDING TO CERTAIN WESTERN
DIPLOMATS IN TIRANA, IS DEFINITELY THINKING OF REESTALBISHING
ITSELF IN ALBANIA, PARTICULARLY IN THE PORT OF VALONA. IT IS
ALSO REPORTED THAT CERTAIN EAST EUROPEAN EMBASSISES IN TIRANA,
PARTICULARLY THAT OF THE GDR, HAVE THE TASK OF STRESSING
TO THE ALBANIANS THE ECONOMIC AND OTHER ADVANTAGES WHICH COULD
RESULT FROM RECONCILIATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IT GOES
WITHOUT SAYING THAT SUCH A RAPPROCHEMENT WOULD NOTICEABLY
STRENGTHEN SOVIET FREEDOM OF MANEUVER VIS-A-VIS YUGOSLAVIA.
END TEXT.STREATOR

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